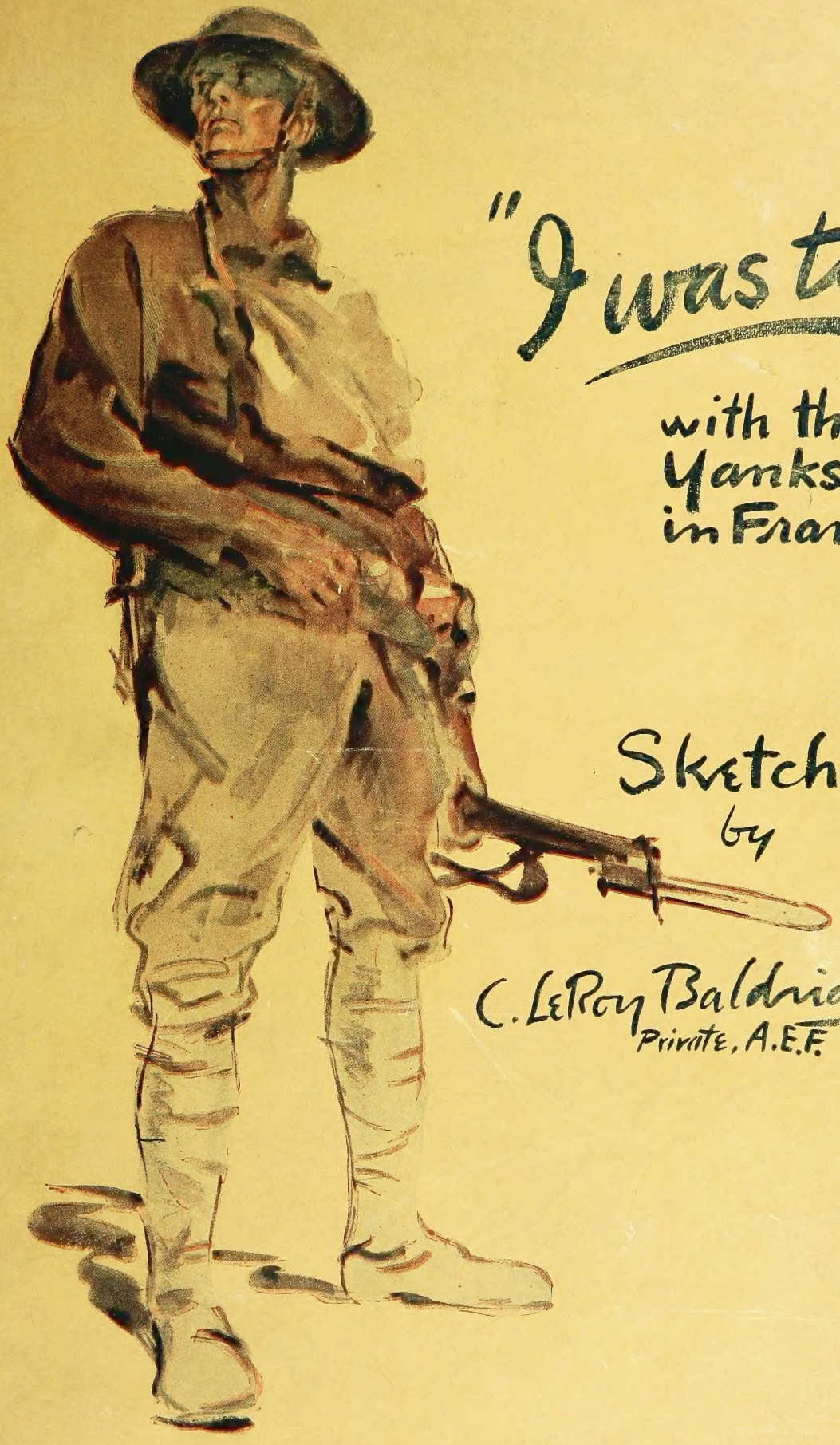


"I was there"

with the Yanks in France

Sketches by

C. LeRoy Baldridge
Private, A.E.F.

PN
527
B 19+

Charles Baskerville, Jr.

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

GIFT OF

Charles Baskerville
Class of 1919

Cornell University Library
D 527.B19
"I was there" with the Yanks on the west
3 1924 026 952 345 olin,ove1

DATE DUE

GAYLORD			PRINTED IN U.S.A.

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924026952345

C.L. Roy Baldridge
Pvt A.E.F
Audenarde Belgium
NOV. 11 1918

"I WAS THERE"

WITH THE YANKS ON THE WESTERN FRONT 1917–1919

BY

C. LEROY BALDRIDGE

PVT. A. E. F.

TOGETHER WITH VERSES

BY

HILMAR R. BAUKHAGE

PVT. A. E. F.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1919

Copyright, 1919
by
C. LEROY BALDRIDGE

360092 B3

SN

TO OUR MOTHERS

Ours the Great Adventure,
Yours the pain to bear,
Ours the golden service stripes,
Yours the marks of care.

If all the Great Adventure
The old Earth ever knew,
Was ours and in this little book
'Twould still belong to you!

These Sketches

were made during a years service as a camion driver with the French army in the Chemin-des-Dames sector and a years service with the A.E.F. as an infantry private on special duty with "The Stars and Stripes," the official A.E.F. newspaper. Most of them were drawn at odd minutes during the French push of 1917 near Fort Malmaison, at loading parks and along the roadside while on truck convoy, and while on special permission to draw and paint with the French army given me by the Grand Quartier Général during the time I was stationed at Soissons. The rest were drawn on American fronts from the Argonne to Belgium as my duties took me from one offensive to another.

It has been a keen regret to me that my artistic skill has been so unequal to these opportunities. The sketches do not sufficiently show war for the stupid horror I know it to be.

I hope, however, they may serve as a record of doughboy types, of the people he lived with in France, with whom he suffered and by whose side he fought.

Many appeared first in "The Stars and Stripes," "Leslie's Weekly," and "Scribner's Magazine," through the courtesy of whose editors I am now enabled to reprint them.

G. Le Roy Baldridge
Private, Am. E. F.

June 1919

I WAS THERE

Sunny France
Warming up the "corned willy" over "corned beat" (solidified alcohol)
Rain overhead and mud underfoot
Baldwyn Near Montfaucon 18

The Yank
C. LeRoy Baldridge
Pvt A.E.F.
'19

Fighting
Trim
C. LeRoy Baldridge

Seicheprey.
America's old home sector
- first trenches entirely under
their own command

Seicheprey
America's old home sector.

C LeRoy Baldridge April '19

THE LINE

Form a line!
Get in line!
From the time that I enlisted
And since Jerry armististed
I've been standing, kidding, cussing,
I've been waiting, fuming, fussing,
In a line.

I have stood in line in mud and slime and sleet,
With the dirty water oozing from my feet,
I have soaked and slid and slipped,
While my tacky slicker dripped,
And I wondered what they'd hand me out to eat.

Get in line!
For supplies and for inspections,
With the dust in four directions,
For a chance to scrub the dirt off,
In the winter with my shirt off,
In a line.

I have sweated in an August training camp,
That would make a prohibition town look damp,
Underneath my dinky cap
While the sun burned off my map
And I waited for some gold-fish (and a cramp!).

Get in line!
For rice, pay-day, pills, and ration,
For corned-willy, army fashion,
In Hoboken, in the trenches,
In a station with the Frenchies,
In a line.

I've been standing, freezing, sweating,
Pushing, shoving, wheezing, fretting,
And I won't be soon forgetting
Though I don't say I'm regretting
That I stood there, with my buddies,
In a line.

Pvt. C. LeRoy Baldridge
A. E. F.

The lids we wear=
The tin derby with Winter knitted helmet
Dungaree style
Old "rain-in-the-face"
The charming red and white effect
Fuzzy-wuzzy
The tank helmet
With its canvas overcoat on
With the French army
Some managed to hang on to the old reliable

He used to
hunt rabbits
in Kentucky
R-B
Ch Roy Baldridge

The job that's never ended
Cleaning up for inspection

First time in two weeks!
Montmeuril
C. Peter Baldridge

The letter from home

reading

The Ration Detail

a job which no one relishes. Each day the other fellows artillery tries to lay down a fire which will keep these boys from getting back. They travel to where their supply company has dumped the food from mule carts - the point nearest front where creaking wheels may go. The man in the center is carrying a string of French loaves, the round, black variety common before we got our own bakeries started.

The Headquarters Company of the Reserve Mallet taking its bath at Chavigny Farm. The tub is a tin-lined cigarette box used by the Y.M.C.A. Water is heated in the old farm fire-place.

"PREPARE FOR ACTION"

I ran into Johnny Redlegs
A-sitting on his bus,
And I asked him why the devil
He dropped half his shells on us.
He just smiles and puffs his corn-cob,
As peaceful as a Persian,
And, "Buddy," says he, "you can't blame me,
You gotta blame dispersion."

I says to Johnny Redlegs,
"If I didn't have nine lives
Your barrage would have got me
With those lousy seventy-fives."
He grins and puffs his corn-cob,
And then he winks, reflective,
And, "Buddy," says he, "you can't blame me
If you pass your damn objective."

I says to Johnny Redlegs
(Just kidding him, you know),
"The trouble with your popgun is
She pops too gol-darned slow."
Then Redlegs drops his corn-cob
And spits on both his han's,
And, "Buddy," says he, "you can kid with me
And the whole damned Field Artilleree,
But there'll be a dud where you used to be
If you kid my swasont-cans!"

"I know a girl at home who looks just like you

"Johnny Redlegs"
guardian of
the
"Soixante-
quinze"
(the famous
French "75")
and the
doughboy who
tries to keep
just the right
distance from
the
covering
barrage
fire
Cpl Roy Baldwin
France

The Bugs"-
Two men, French style tanks

An Indian
M. P.

"A Chance
to get
even"

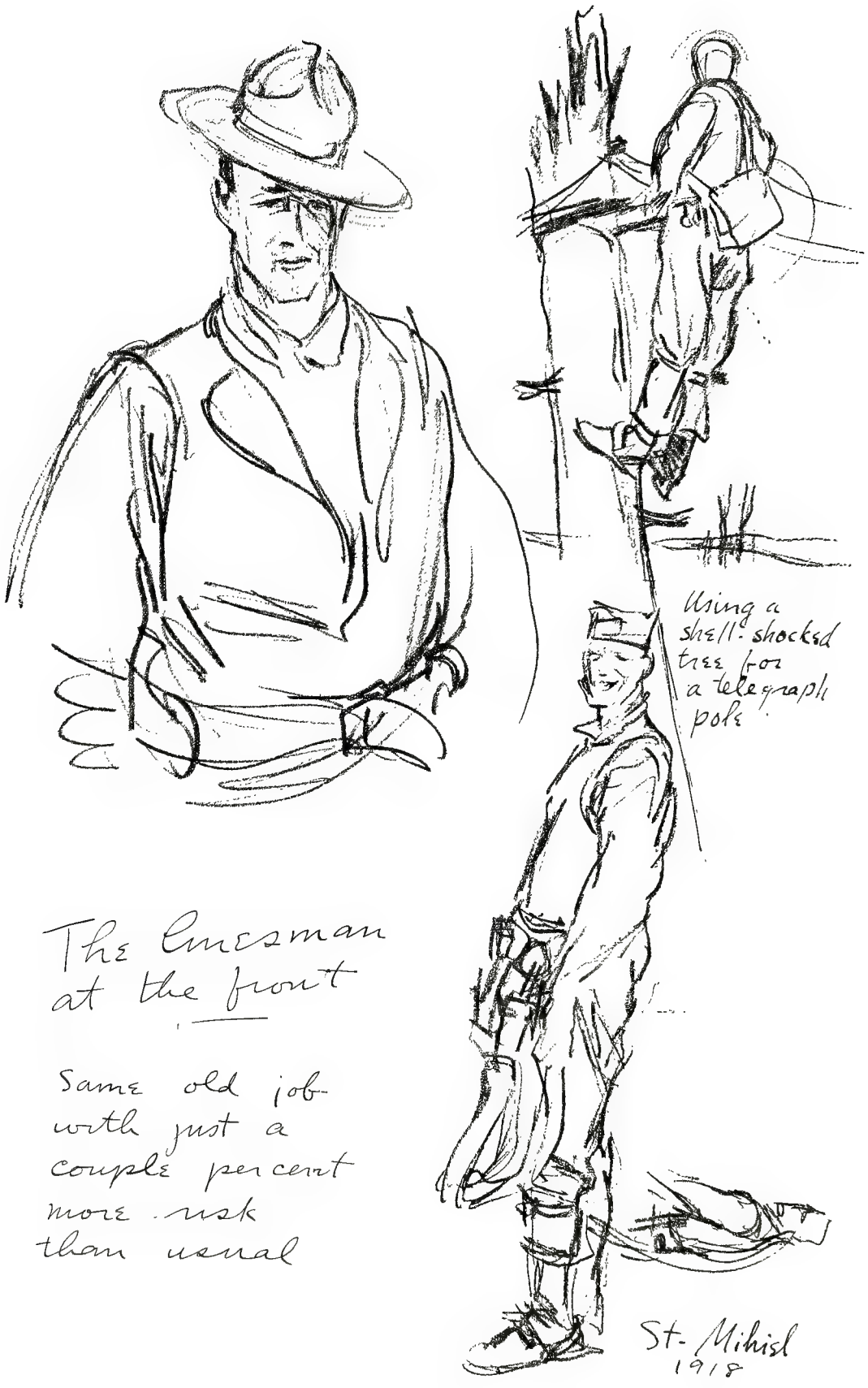
A Survival
of the old
regular army
C LeRoy Baldridge

Among the
first
sent
across
They served
with the French
in '17
C. LeRoy Baldridge

Reading then shuts

Her boy too —

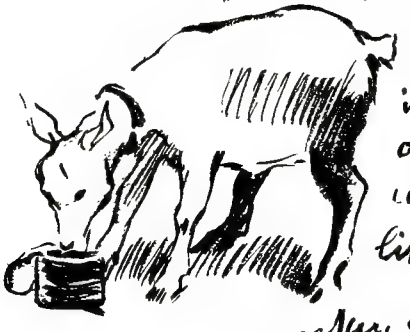
American and French field artillery gun crews camped together in a wood near Chassemy. The canvas overhead keeps the fire from being observed by aeroplanes at night.


Using a shell-shocked tree for a telegraph pole
The Lucsman at the front
Same old job- with just a couple percent more risk than usual
St-Mihiel
1918

Dumb Beasts

In the Missouri draft

Wagon train trucks: "Maud" and "Mud"



Former refugee - now mascot and the only man in the outfit who likes monkey meat

Yanks with French Type of Anti-Aircraft
C. LeRoy Baldridge

The
Aeroplane
Fight
C LeRoy Baldridge
1917

RELIEF

z-z-z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-Z-e-e-e-e-E-E - - - - - - - b Boom!
There's another!
God, this pack is heavy.
Glad I pinched the extra willy,
Guess I'll need it.
And the sweater, too,
out there.

-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-Z-E-E-E-EEEEEE- - b Boom!
There's another!
Jesse! that was a close one.
Wonder if.....good Christ! Where's Charlie?
Got him clean. God curse those Jerries!
I'll get even, — p'raps —
out there.

z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-E-E-E-E-e-e- - - - - b Boom!
There's another!
Over!
Well, if one has my name on it
Then the guv'ment pays ten thousand.
What's the use? I couldn't spend it.
Leastways not —
out there.

z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z-Z-e-e-e-e-e-E-E-E-E- - - b Boom!
There's another.
Where'd I put that plug of Climax?
Oh, I s'pose somebody swiped it.
Gee, I never thought that Charlie...
Glad I ain't out on the wire.
This damn trench is dark — ouch! Damn it,
Wait a minute.... Hell, I'm coming,
I can't run in this equipment.
What the hell's the rush to get —
out there?

The Relief

Coming up to the front lines through the communication trenches, which extend a kilometer or so. On these occasions little love is lost on "beautiful moonlight nights"

C. LeRoy Baldridge 1918

The roofs of Vaux
after a few minutes of Hawk
Barrage lifted -

"The Germans have gone!"

The shell hole
Central

On
Guard

The noncombatant—

The family with whom I lived in Soissons

In 1870 Grandpère was taken as a prisoner to Coblenz

Madam Framary who sewed on my buttons and who transformed miserable French army rations into marvelous dishes

Erasme, the youngest son who starts his three years of compulsory training in the fall 1919

The eldest son After his three years of training he was called to war. He has never come back.

C. LeRoy Baldridge – Soissons - 1918

C. LeRoy Baldridge
France 1917

Awaiting the signal to attack. The sergeant is ready to blow the whistle for his squad to follow him out through a path in the barbed wire. In another minute they will advance close behind the bursting shells of a heavy barrage which, lifting, will leave them face to face with German machine guns.

"American Field Service" drivers at Longpont/1917

Noyon 1918

The Paris Bus
many kilometers from the Place de l'Opéra—
used for transporting troops, horses, and fresh meat to the front

FATIGUE

You can see 'em in the movies,
With the sunlight on their guns,
You can read in all the papers
Of the charge that licked the Huns,
You can read of "khaki heroes"
And of "gleaming bayonet,"
But there's one thing that the writers
And the artist all forget:

That's me!
On K. P.
In my suit of denim blue
I am thinking — not of you —
But the places where I'd like the top to be!

On the posters in the windows,
In the monthly magazine,
Are the boys in leather leggins
Such as Pershing's never seen;
Oh, they love to paint 'em pretty,
All dressed up and fit to kiss, —
Ain't it funny there's a picture
That they always seem to miss?

Bless me soul,
Loading coal!
In my little shimmy-shirt,
Eyes and mouth full up with dirt —
(In the next war I'll be living at the Pole.)

LeRoy Baldridge

Built
for
speed
and with
light pack
to match
P. B—
Belleau Wood
1918
A Marine

"Steady, buddy!"

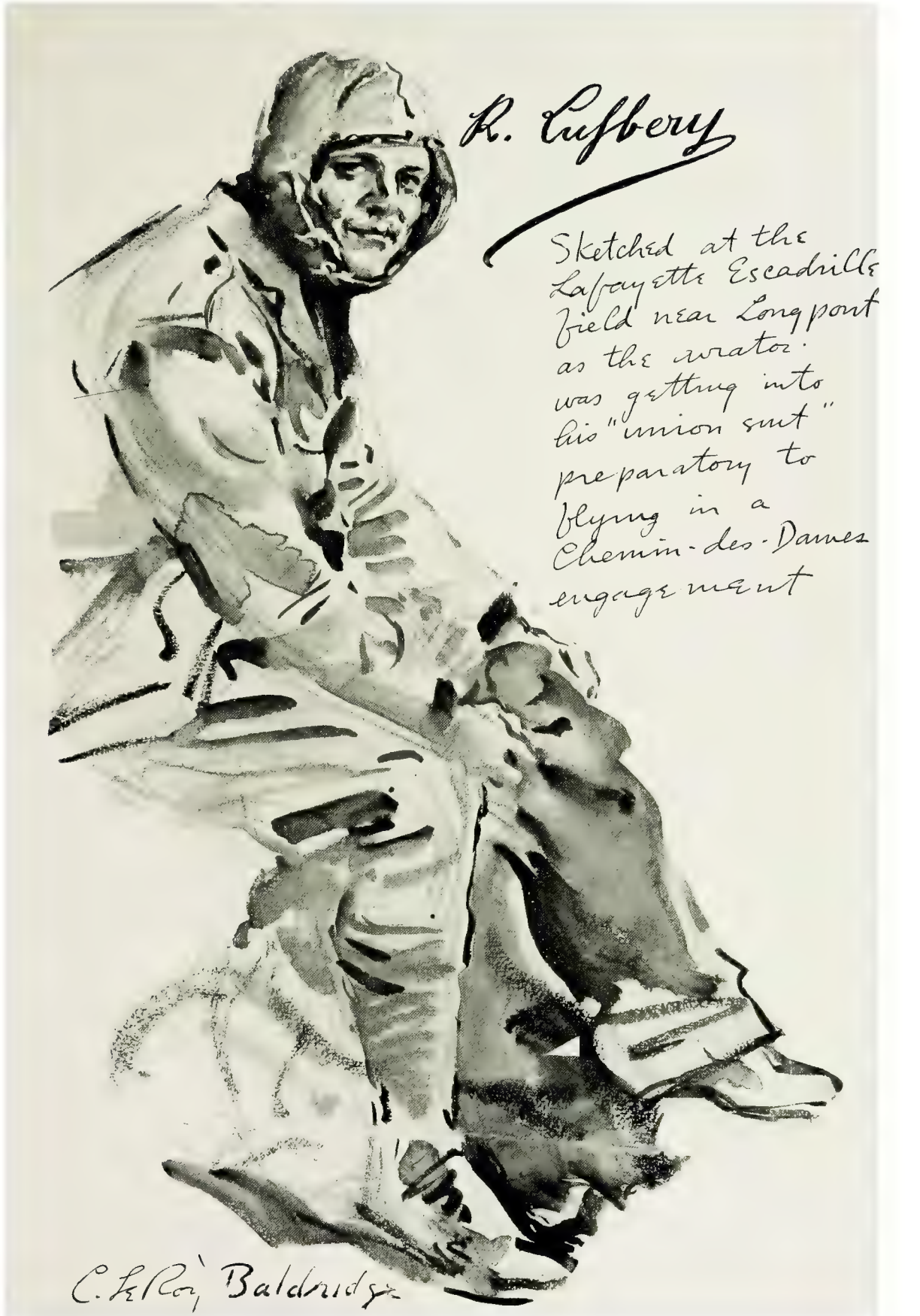
Never too far gone for a smoke
But he wears the "Legion of Honor and the "croix de guerre" —

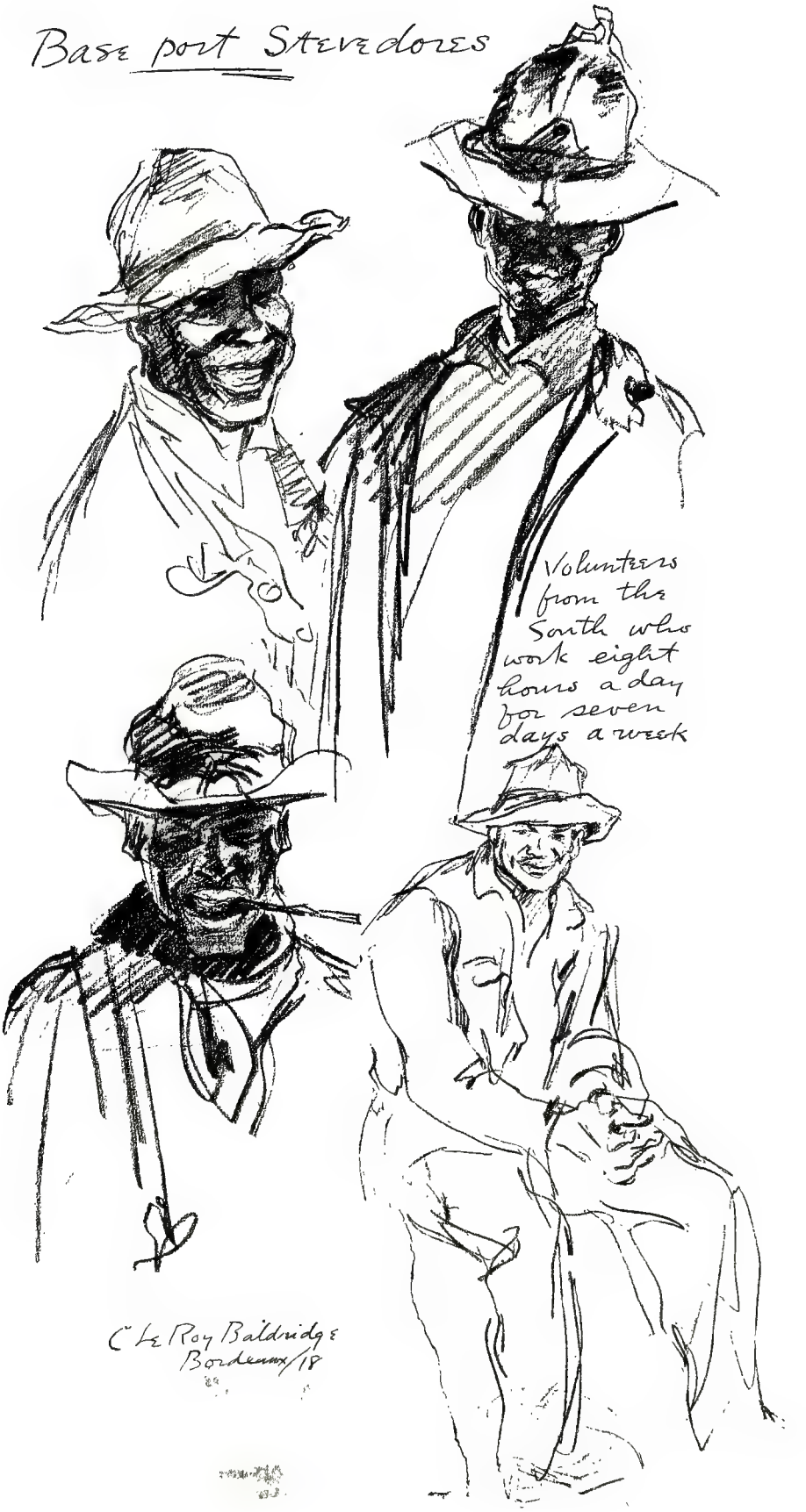
The "Territorial" the name given French poilu between the ages of 34 and 40

C. E. Ray Baldridge
Vailly - 1917

In an abri waiting
for the "Gothas" (big German planes) to go home

The veteran of the Spanish-American war tells 'em how it ought to be done


R. Luffbery
Sketched at the Lafayette Escadrille field near Longpont as the aviator was getting into his "union suit" preparatory to flying in a Chemin-des-Dames engagement
C. LeRoy Baldridge


Base port Stevedores
Volunteers from the South who work eight hours a day for seven days a week
C LeRoy Baldridge
Bordeaux/18

A 26 Division Wagon Train
moving toward Chassem,
wood. 1918.
Mule and Prairie Schooner on
a country made decent by war.

C. Le Roy Baldridge

The end of his service

Veterans
of the
Marne
C. LeRoy Baldridge Pvt Inf

POILU

When we left the transport
Back in St. Nazaire,
Second thing you asked us, —
"Quand finit la guerre?"
Didn't know your lingo
You weren't hard to get,
Peace was what you wanted —
And a cigarette.

Then up in the trenches
It was just the same,
"When's it going to finish?"
Didn't seem quite game.
Then we saw you strafing,
Saw we had you wrong,
Wondered how you stood it
Four years long.

Drank your sour pinard,
Shared what smokes we had,
Got to know you better,
Found you weren't so bad,
Four years in the trenches!
(One's enough, I'll say)
How the hell'd you do it
On five sous a day?

Pvt. C. LeRoy Baldridge
Chemin des Dames '17

C. La Rey Baldridge
France '17

American being taught by Frenchman to drive truck so that the latter may return to his farm.

Moving up
over a corduroy road hastily
laid down by a génie (engineer) regiment
in war-wasted land. The piece
of wall on the right is all that
remains of a French village
of five hundred inhabitants

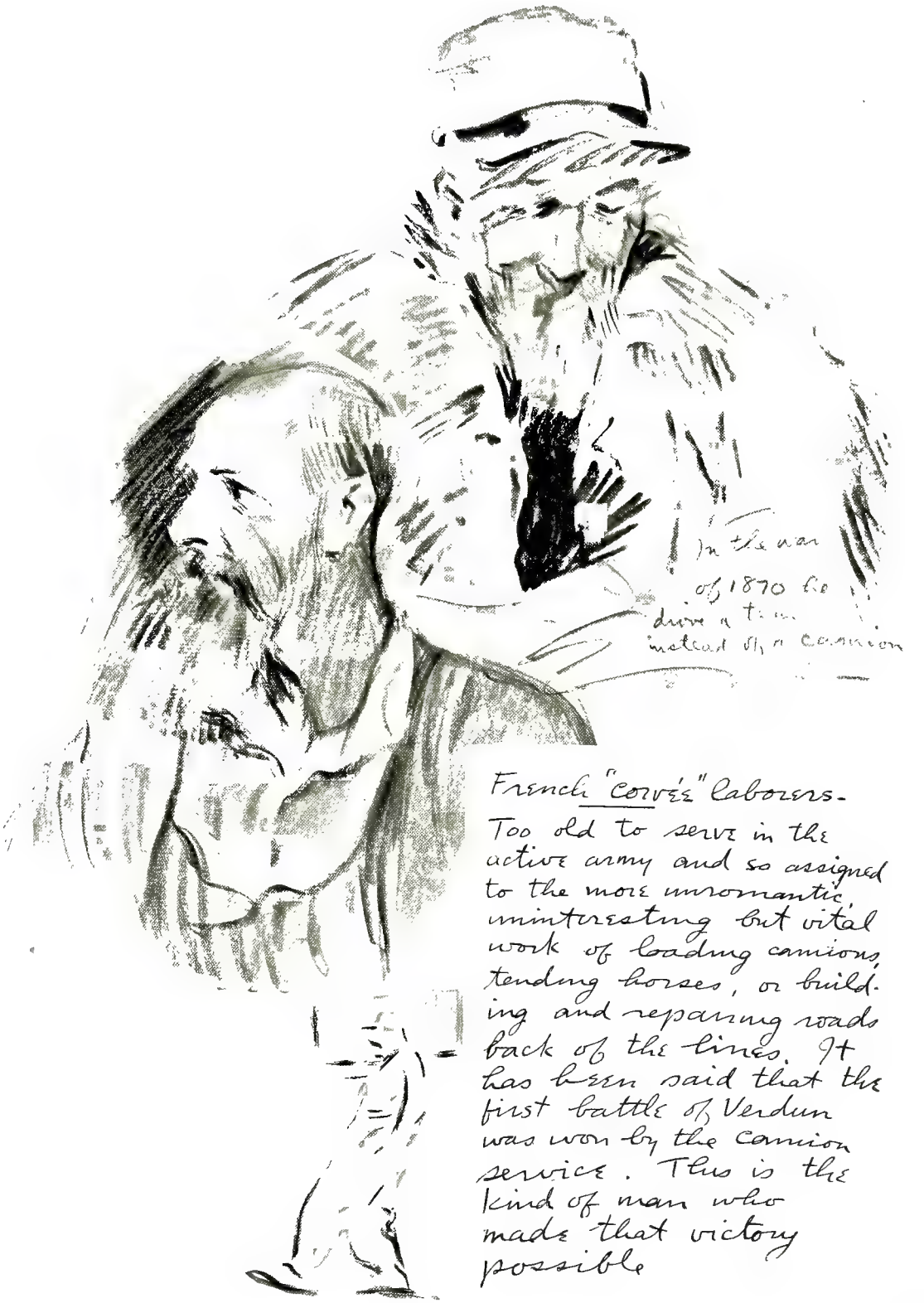
Arabian Knight
Between drives he works on the railroad
On other days he rides a camel in Algeria
Baldridge

Senegalais types
volunteers used for
the attack and for
labor on roads

C Le Roy Baldridge
Vailly 1917

The aumonier
– padre priest
who marches
with the
troops
Of the
youngest
class
A Father
of the class
of '89
C LeRoy Baldridge 1917
Moulin Labfaux

Un canonnier marin sur le front



French "corvée" laborers.
Too old to serve in the active army and so assigned to the more unromantic, uninteresting but vital work of loading camions, tending horses, or building and repairing roads back of the lines. It has been said that the first battle of Verdun was won by the camion service. This is the kind of man who made that victory possible

A
"Walking
Case"
France.
August.
-18.
Lt. Roy Baldridge Pvt. Inf.

19
SAFE
Roy Baldridge
France '17
Toul sector days-
Waiting for something to
Happen-

Un grand blessé
A Medal for Valor
A wounded Chasseur
and
"Fritz" who has the next cot.
They get the same treatment and
neither seems to mind the proximity
Meaux
Baldwin 17

An American ambulance at
a poste de secours (first aid station)
Ostel - 1917

An old trench
in the Argonne near Montfaucon

Cle Roy Baldridge Pvt. Inf
The Edge

THAT QUIET SECTOR

Four hours off — two hours on —
And not a thing to do but think,
And watch the mud and twisted wire
And never let your peepers blink.

Two hours on — four hours off —
The dug-out's slimy as the trench;
It stinks of leather, men, and smoke, —
You wake up dopey from the stench.

Four hours off — two hours on —
Back on the same old trick again,
The same old noth'n' to do at all
From yesterday till God knows when.
On post or not it's just the same,
The waiting is what gets your goat
And makes you want to chuck the game
Or risk a trench-knife in your throat.

Two hours on — four hours off —
I s'pose our job is not so hard, —
I s'pose sometime we're going to quit —
. . . . . .

The ghosts we leave — do they stand guard?

Pvt. C. LeRoy Baldridge France

The water wagon filled with red-hot coffee going to the ration dump via shell fire and not losing any time about it — Outside Bellean wood June '18

He's been on every front from Chateau-Thierry to the Rhine

C. H. Roy Baldwin Lt

Coblenz - 1919

After the German retreat
Clearing up old quarry
used by Fritz as a
barracks — Chemin des Dames

"Wagon Soldiers"
(nickname for artillerymen)

Made in America

"Marraines" (Godmothers)
who kept their
poilu godsons
at the front in
good cheer with
letters and pack-
ages from home,
and who took
their Yank cousins
to their hearts
in the same
kindly spirit

in Paris
and the
provinces

A type to match
the ideal of every
man who looks

Baldridge 1917

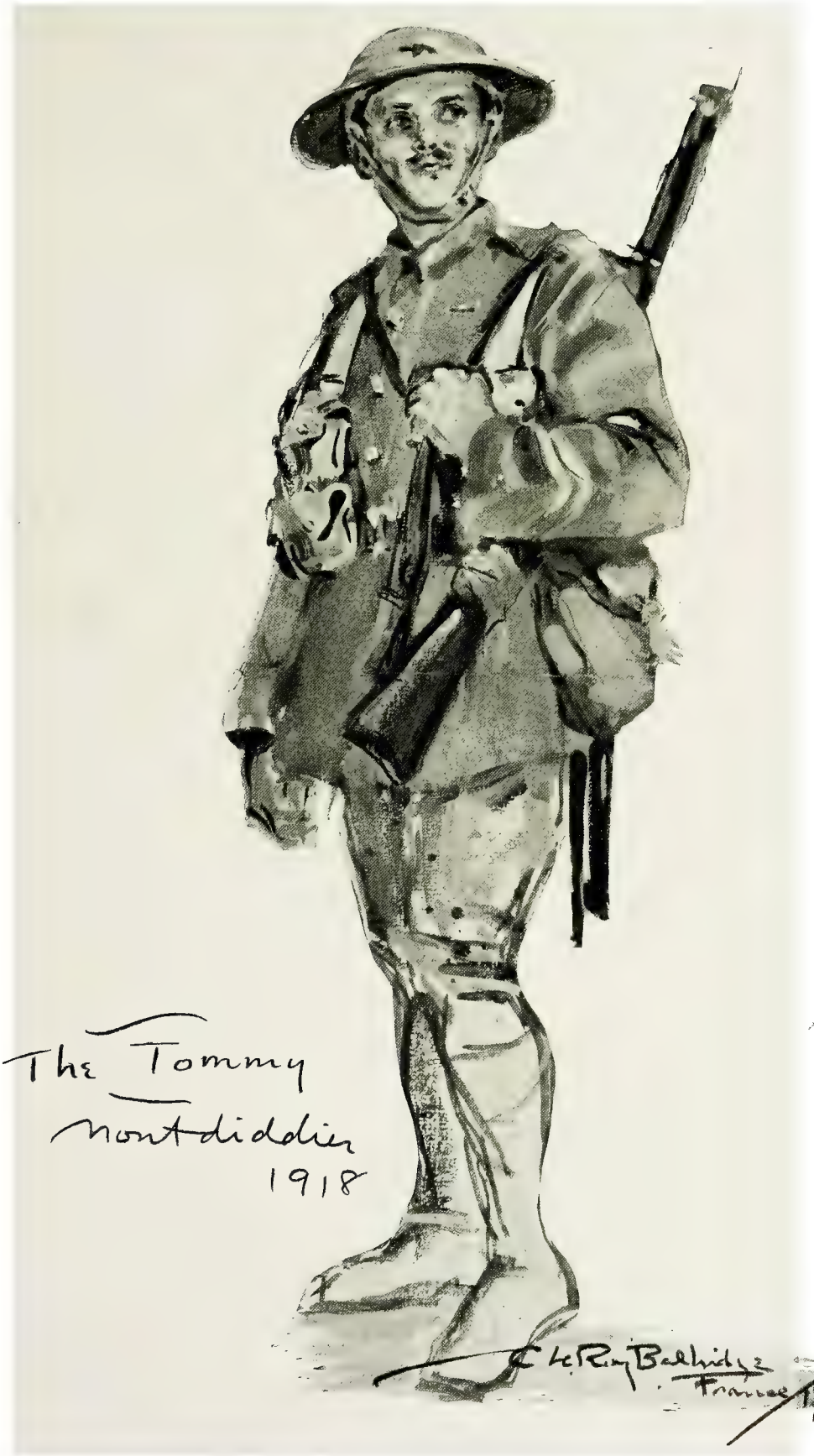
"Papa Perrin"
Soissons
1917

No one knows where the poilu slang word "Pinard" came from, but everyone knows what it means. It's half way between water and red wine, with the kick mostly in the taste. It is served as an army ration. The poilu's canteen is always full of it.

"We aint no thin red 'eroes,
"Nor we aren't no blackguards too," —
Baldridge

One of the
Agent-de-Ville = M. P.
teams of Paris
patrolling the
boulevard. They
have authority over both
Yank and Poilu
- C. Le Roy Baldridge -
Paris 1919

Belgian Types
© LeRoy Baldridge


The Tommy
Montdidier
1918
C. McRay Baldridge
France 18

In this month
of July
France
R.B.

Caught by a star shell at a listening post, and attempting to "freeze" like a rabbit with the hunter upon him, to look as much like a lump of mud as possible until the glare dies down.

Americans quartered in the mediaeval monastary of Pont St Maxence

French Colonial Types
White, black, and half-way.
From Algeria
A Zouave
From Morocco

"P. G's" (prisonniers de la guerre) who are keeping in physical trim by lumber work in a forest where once the kings of France took their morning walks

— Baldridge Croix St Ouen 1918

A Yank going on leave having a midnight cup of "vin rouge" in a compartment of a Permissionnaires Train - with a soixante-quinze gunner, a sailor from a submarine, a Chasseur, an aviation sergeant, and several infantrymen. For the next ten days of "permission" these men can forget war.

Cecil Coy Inlander
En route - Nice 1918

The barber shop
quartette on the
trip home –
(no ocean rules about noise this time).
Baldridge

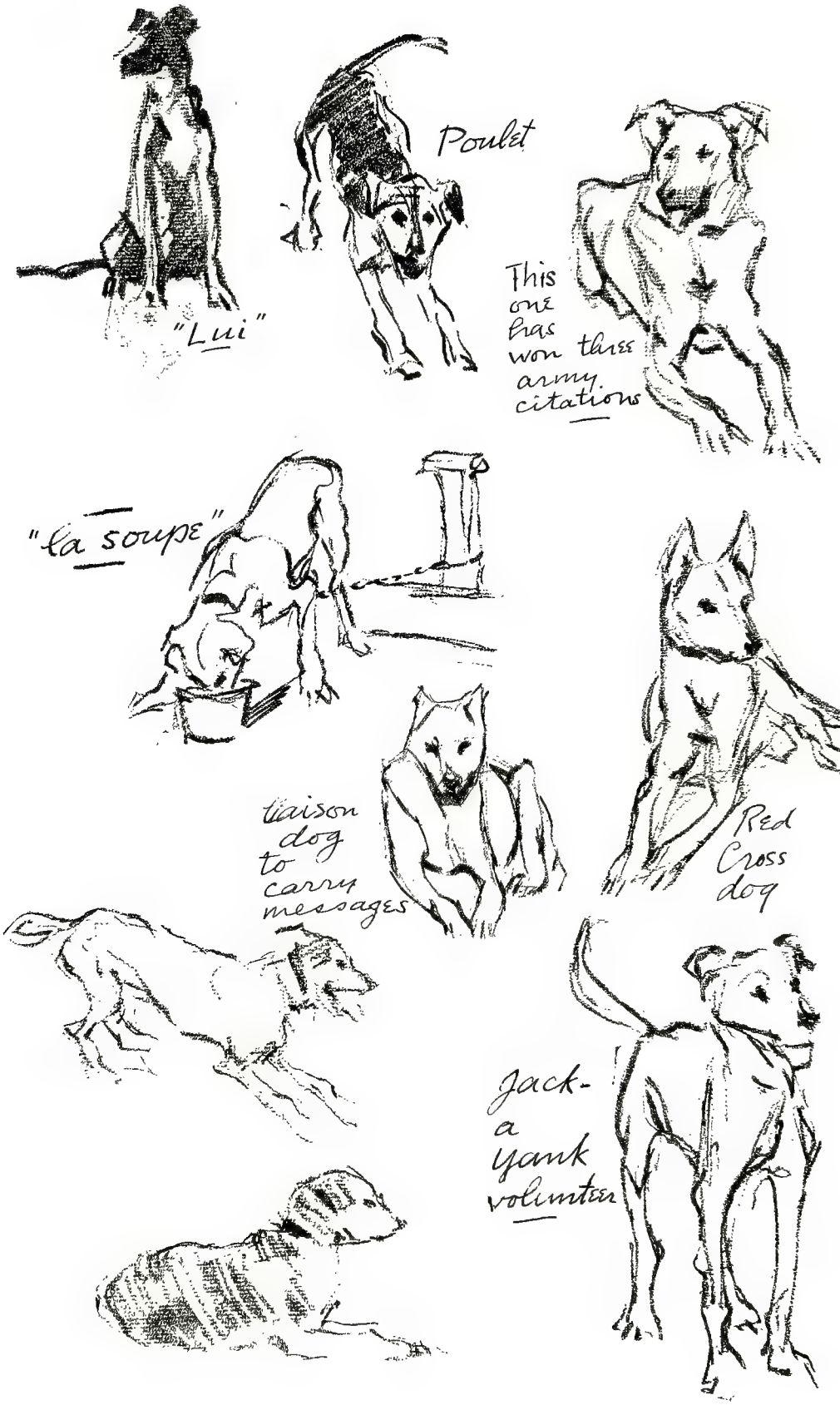
Coming Out!
dirty, tired
and
grinning!
Château-Thierry
June - 1918
Baldridge

Baldridge

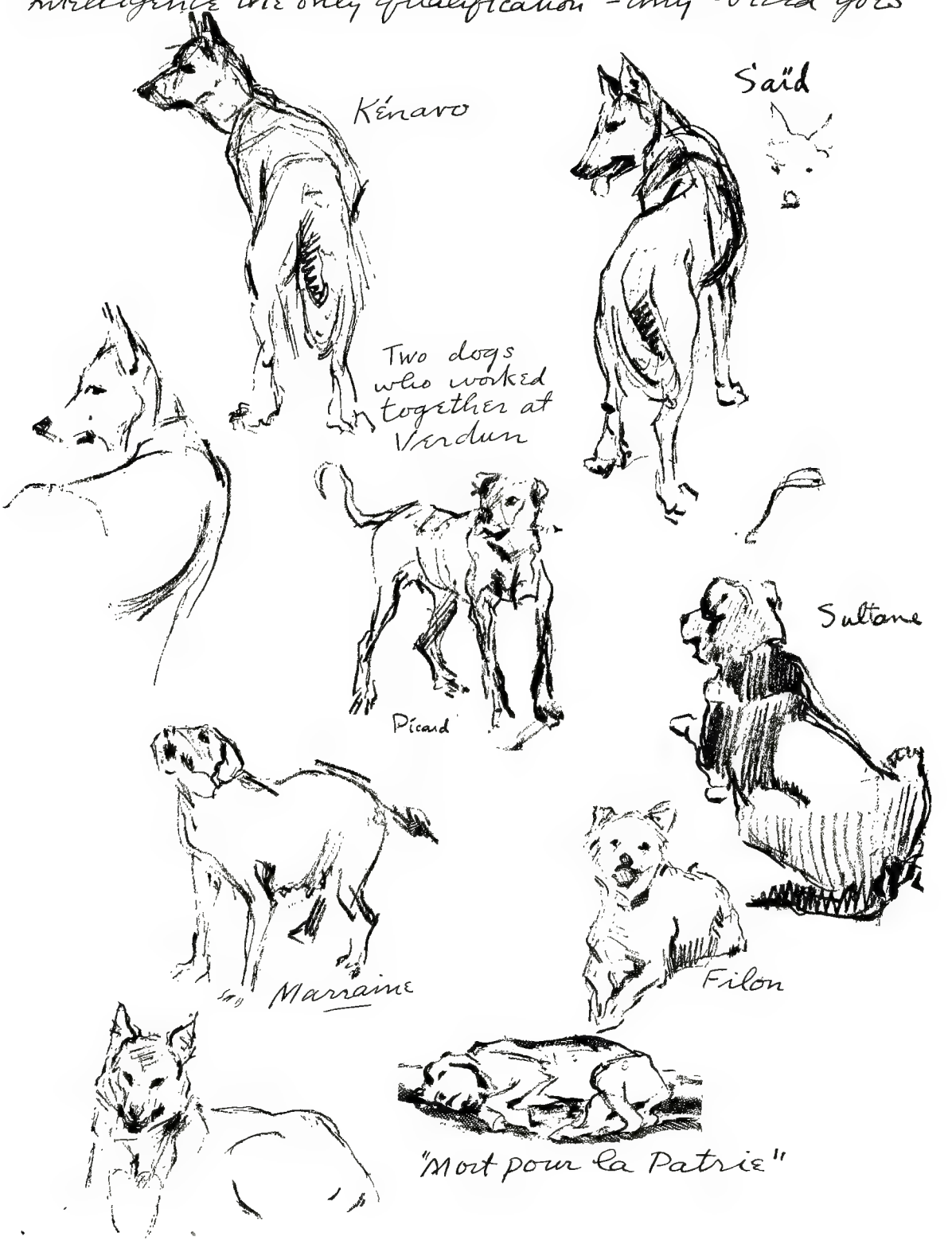
Forty-feet underground in an old stone quarry formerly used by the Germans as barracks

Near Fort Mahon.

This is the cellar of her home. The house above no longer exists. For her living she washes clothes for the soldiers. Her daughter with two young children is a prisoner in Belgium. A blind grandchild lives in the cave.


"Lui"
Poulet
This one has won three army citations
"la soupe"
liaison dog to carry messages
Red Cross dog
Jack-a Yank volunteer

French dogs loaned by private families and trained by the army for use as Red Cross aids, sentinels, and message carriers. Intelligence the only qualification - any breed goes



The O.D. Circuit
"Pull the shades down Mary Ann"
A love song from The East -
Our own jazz band

"Coming out" after "The Washington Birthday Raid" Chemin-des Dames - 1918 -

An African Mohammedan,
An Indo-Chinese Annamite
and a prisoner
who all crack
rocks nine
hours a day
for the roads
of France

C. LeRoy Baldridge

C. LeRoy Baldridge
France
1918

French Colonials from northern Africa used in shock troops

First regiment Zouave

Cheltey Baldridge
France 18

SALVAGE

I'll be stepping wide in these russet shoes!
Leather putts beside, honest I can't lose!
Guess the guy that had 'em left 'em in a hurry!
What the hell, he's S. O. L.
I should worry.

"That's my second razor!"
"Then gimme the blades."
"Whatcha got there, Buddy?"
"Pair of tailor-mades!"

I'll be walking on air! Yes. . . they was the top's!
He won't need 'em out there — if a big one drops.

"Going to keep that sweater?"
"No, look at the dirt."
"Put that on you, Buddy,
"You'll have to read your shirt!"

If I get that leave I can use 'em to dance.
Well, I should grieve, —he had his chance.

"Nothing doing! Beat it!
"Saw that luger first!"
"Ten francs says I want it."
"Done. I'll cure this thirst."

Brand-new russet shoes, I'll be stepping high!
Someone's got to lose, glad I ain't the guy.
If I'm going to use 'em, guess I'll have to hurry,
The next H. E. may be meant for me —
I should worry!

Baldridge

In 1870 he lost an arm,
in 1917 he lost a son
and everything he owned
C. Le Roy Baldridge
France / 18

Lafayette Escadrille Men –
Marius – who helps keep the big planes in order
Pilot
Observer
Lorpont France A1ov-17
C. Le Roy Baldridge

Making brooms from brushwood at Antibes for use on army roads.

The Signal Corps

France, Aug. 1918

C. LeRoy Baldridge Pvt., Inf.

The gold star

Both under Arms
The "pepin" of
the '89 class
and the
"Marie-Louise"
of the
last
call
C. LeRoy Baldridge
France '19
Soissons

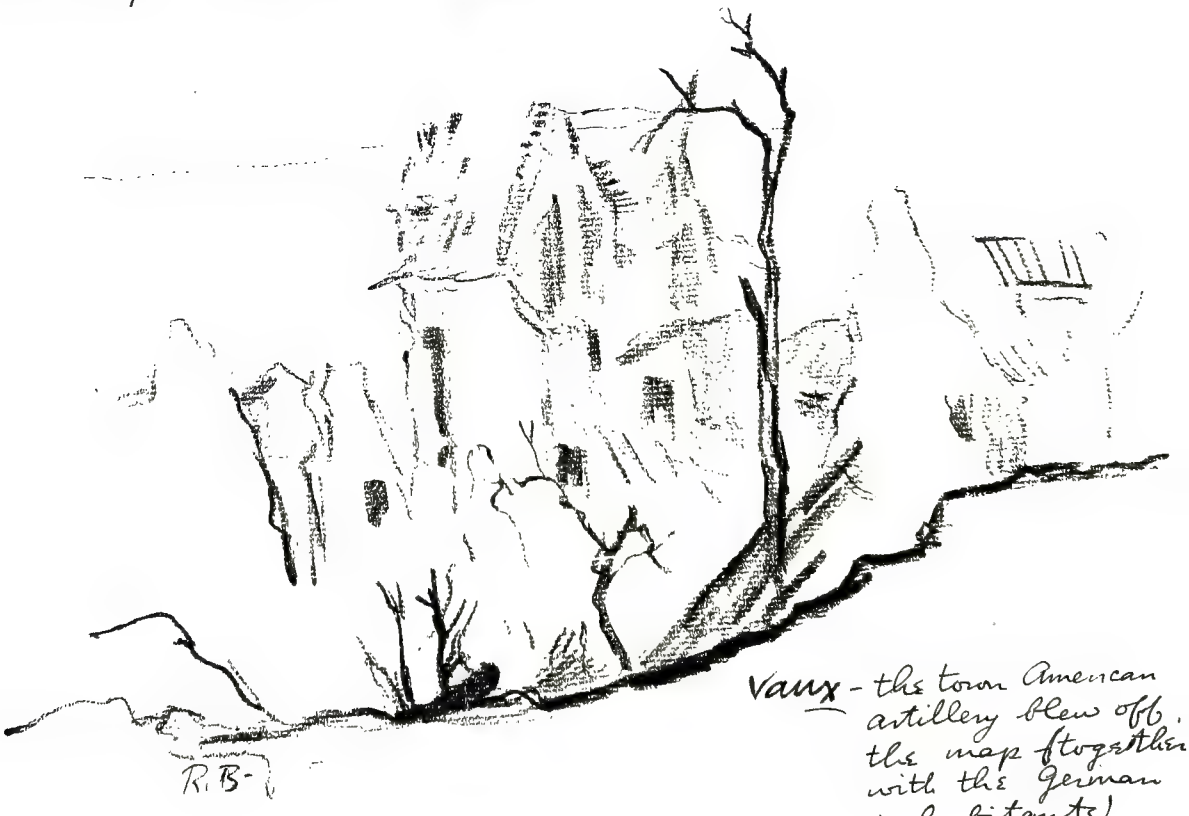
Café group of poilus listening to an American popular song for the first time, sung by Yanks of The American Field Service

HOME

Some of the first ones
C. LeRoy Baldridge
France 1917

Feet

C. LeRoy Baldridge



Vaux - the town American artillery blew off the map (together with the German inhabitants)

R. B.

Dugouts built for German officers near Soissons used by them in 1915. Decked out with cement and mosaic floors, paper on the walls, tile roofs and stained glass windows. Used by our troops in 1918

Baldridge
Am. Hospital No 5

The American
Trained Nurse

What one man
is fighting for
C LeRoy Baldridge
Soissons — 1917

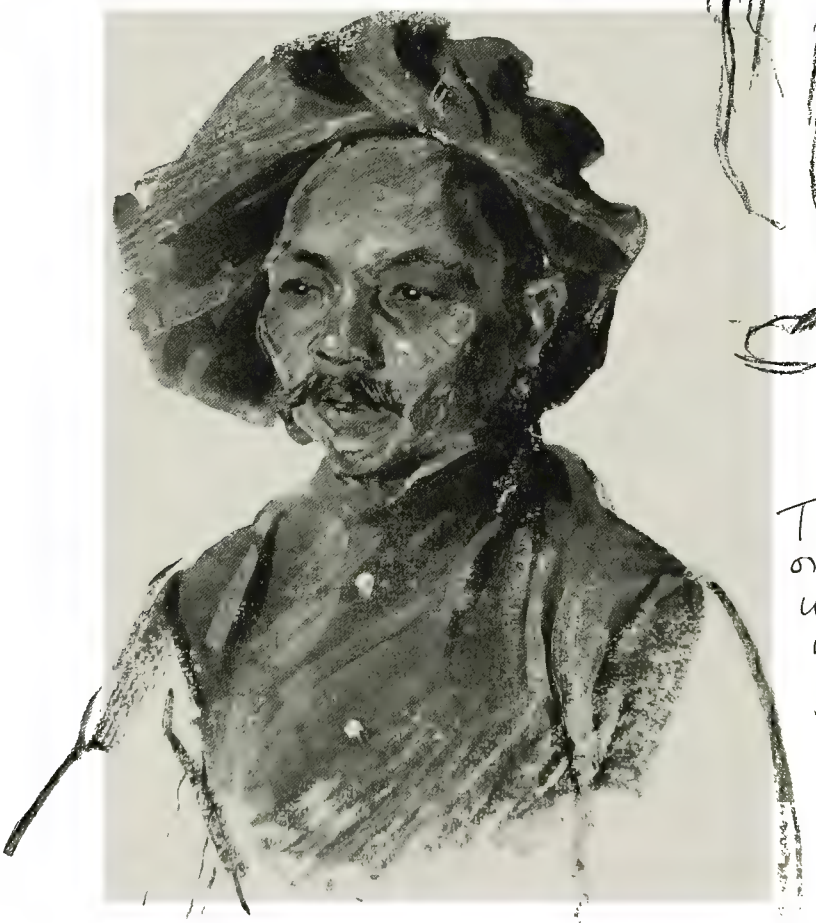
"Once upon a time."

Before leaving France 750,000 doughboys contributed enough to support 3,444 French war orphans for one year, and the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper left nearly three million francs toward their education

Annamites

French colonial troops from Indo-China

(Blackened teeth as an aid to health and beauty)



An Oriental pipe and a French brigquette to light it with

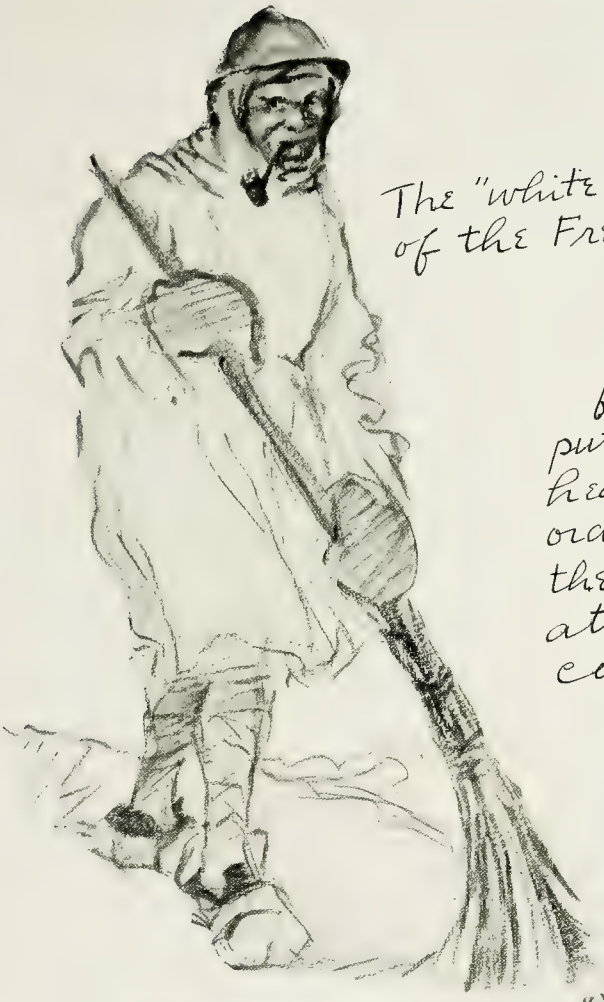
These paid colonials were used as attacking troops, as laborers on roads and as drivers of light trucks

Sergeant Tam

Lizzy-sur-Ourcq

(LeRoy Baldridge

France - 1918



The "white wing" of the French front—

—

but when he puts on his heavy marching order it means there's an attack coming

A king in his own country

EQUIPMENT C

The Loot is getting wabbly,
With his dinky little pack, —
He can hear the sergeant cussing
But he doesn't dare look back.

But we ain't saying nothing
Since we got the order "route,"
Too dog-dead for even wond'ring
If we'll ever hear "fall out."

My damn rifle and my helmet
Keep on getting in the way,
And my brains are numb and dopey
Try'n' to cuss and try'n' to pray.

My throat's as dry as sawdust
And my right arm's gone to sleep,
And the pack-strap on my shoulder
Cuts a slit two inches deep.

I just lift one foot and shove it
And it hits most any place,
Then I lift and shove the other
T'keep from falling on my face.

If the guide should change the cadence
I'll be damned if I could stop;
If you pushed me with a feather —
Well, I'd just curl up and drop.

And I know damn well there's stragglers
That'll ride up on a truck —
Guess if you ain't born a quitter,
You're just simply outa luck.

I suppose we'll keep on going --
Huh? The Skipper's faced about?
Halt!. . . I'm dreaming. . . in the daisies. . .
You don't need. . . to say. . . "fall out!"

Pott C. LeRoy Baldridge

For Some of Us
The War will
never end.
C LeRoy B
1919

C. L. Roy Baldridge Soissons – 1917

In an old Roman cellar two floors underground where civilians went during air raids as bombing planes passed over on their way to Compiegne, Paris, and interior cities. This "cave" was considered absolutely safe, but in October 1918 was completely demolished by one "155" shell.

Mess and distribution of mail at the "non-com" school for the M. T. C. at Longpont

Cpl Roy Baldridge 1917

Far from Broadway - S.R.O. -
Christmas 1917 at a YMCA hut

Dressing a
gas burn case

Americans quartered
in the old abbey
St John de Vine of
Soissons in the
spring of '18

All the Same Family
Henri, who tends sheep with his assistant,
Leroy
She teaches us French
Jean, who comes around at mess time for "confiture Americaine," and who has learned how to say "chewing gum" and "cigarette."
And Pierre picked the spuds

Their last war
Baldridge-
Chateau Thierry-France 1918

The town of Cuffies (sur Aisne) held by the germans till 1916. When the old inhab. itants began moving back in; they were assisted in re-establishing their life there by the American Red Cross

The site of the home of Madam Crépin where the Red Cross set up a barrack cottage for her.

The glory of Reims

Harold Roy Baldridge
Reims-Nov- 1918

Cut off from rations for three days in the wood – with one can of tomatoes for both food and drink –

A sixteen year old volunteer

Ray Baldridge

"MADELON"

It seemed years since I had seen one, —
Years of hiking, sweat and blood,
Didn't think there was a clean one
In these miles of men and mud.

Well, I stood there, laughing, drinking,
Kidding her in bon fransay
But the things that I was thinking
Were a thousand miles away.

Sewed my stripe on like a mother,
Gee! She was a pretty kid....
But I left her like a brother, —
Shake her hand was all I did.

Then I says: "Vous, all right, cherry —"
And my throat stuck, and it hurt....
And I showed her what I carry
In the pocket of my shirt.

("Maison Courtois")
France

Pvt. Sidney Baldwin
A.E.F.

A second floor billet

Outpost at Hershbach Germany

Madelon of the
village, who washed
our clothes - and
who still has
some of those we
had to leave
when we were
were pulled out
of the sector
in the middle
of the
night
C. LeRoy Baldridge.

Neat but not gaudy
As we came home - on the transport

Troops coming home from Marseilles go by way of Africa and stop to coal at Oran. Here the doughboy meets the French Arab soldier with whom he fought side by side at Soissons.

France 1919
Ready to go Home

Reading the Draft Covenant
for The League of Nations-
Paris: —
Pvt C. E. Le Roy Baldridge
Peace Conference —
Feb 14 1919
General Bliss
Colonel House
Secretary Lansing
-The President-
M. Clemenceau
Mr Balfour

Blue denims
for the
trip home
S. S. Canada
1919

Baldridge
Dec. 1918

"Outpost at Molsberg, Germany, in ancient castle which stands just on the edge of the American occupied area and the Neutral Zone.

NOVEMBER ELEVENTH

We stood up and we didn't say a word,
It felt just like when you have dropped your pack
After a hike, and straightened out your back
And seem just twice as light as any bird.

We stood up straight and, God! but it was good!
When you have crouched like that for months, to stand
Straight up and look right out toward No-Man's-Land
And feel the way you never thought you could.

We saw the trenches on the other side
And Jerry, too, not making any fuss,
But prob'ly stupid-happy, just like us.
Nobody shot and no one tried to hide.

If you had listened then I guess you'd heard
A sort of sigh from everybody there,
But all we did was stand and stare and stare,
Just stare and stand and never say a word.